Not unfrequently it is PURIFYING in its nature. It is IrTlSie furnace that the dross is separated.

Now, it is often difficult to determine, as to any given affliction, whether it is meant to accomplish the one or the other of these purposes, or whether it may not be subservient to them all. Here, as in regard to every dispensation, we are on safe ground, when, in the first instance, we observe God in every event ; and when, in the second place, we inquire what are the lessons which it is fitted to read us. This should be the habit of every soul which is waiting with becoming obeisance upon the teaching of its Creator. When we make the farther inquiry, What is the end contemplated by God, in ordaining this event or that event ? difficulties thicken around us. One answer we should always be ready to give, and that is, that the human inind cannot discover all the purposes which may be intended by any of the operations of God. For he accomplishes a variety of ends by the same means; and it would be presumptuous in us to conclude that we had discovered all the objects contemplated in any one of his dispensations. One salutary reflection will rise in every thinking mind on the survey of affliction under all its various forms—that it is a blessed thing that God has kept such agency in his own hand, instead of committing it to man; for trials, like powerful medicines, need to be dispensed in proper quantities and by a careful hand, lest there be one drop too little or too much.

Great caution must at all times be exercised in deciding upon what are supposed to be the judgments of heaven. The Great Teacher, who has given us such enlarged and comforting views of the Divine guardianship, is careful to warn us against the influence of prejudice and passion in the interpretation of the proceedings of God towards our fellow-men. " Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because

they suffered such things ? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, on whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above ail men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish/' The error of the Jews manifestly consisted in yielding to an uncharitable tempef of mind. The same error, proceeding from the same spirit, is still exhibited. If an individual has always been